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The amount of time a school superintendent spends in the various functions of his job is studied. The data used were those collected by Robert Utter and Gordon Anderson in 76 school districts in the Metropolitan School Study Council and the Associated Public School Systems during 1964-65. Included were school systems ranging in size from 975 to 91219 pupils. A questionnaire elicited information from superintendents on the allocation of their time among various functions and among various classes of recipients of their services. It was found that as a school district increases in size the average superintendent spends more time in general policy development and school-community relations, and less time in staff-personnel administration and procurement of materials. (HW)

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	Total Percentage	At Desk	With Teachers	With Specialists	With Others
Building Unit Management	—	—	—	—	—
General Policy Development	12.5	2.6	2.4	3.5	4.0
Staff Personnel Administration	22.0	7.0	6.0	2.0	7.0
School-Community Relations	12.0	3.0	1.4	.6	7.0
Budgeting and Financial Planning	12.0	8.4	1.2	1.4	1.0
Management of Funds	11.0	6.0	—	.6	4.4
Procurement of Materials	5.4	1.0	.4	1.4	2.6
Transportation	2.2	1.4	—	—	.8
Physical Plant Management	4.1	.8	—	.8	2.5
Plant Planning and Construction	15.0	3.5	.7	7.2	3.6
Total	96.2	33.7	12.1	17.5	32.9

TABLE IV
ALLOCATION OF SUPERINTENDENTS' TIME AMONG VARIOUS CLASSES OF RECIPIENTS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF 2,000 TO 5,000 ENROLLMENT

	Total Percentage	At Desk	With Teachers	With Specialists	With Others
Building Unit Management	1.9	.6	.1	.5	.7
General Policy Development	16.3	4.8	2.3	3.4	5.8
Staff Personnel Administration	18.4	6.3	2.2	4.9	5.0
School-Community Relations	15.4	4.8	1.0	1.0	8.6
Budgeting and Financial Planning	14.0	7.7	1.0	1.9	3.4
Management of Funds	4.7	2.2	.2	1.1	1.2
Procurement of Materials	4.0	1.8	.5	.8	.9
Transportation	1.9	.5	—	.6	.8
Physical Plant Management	4.2	1.5	—	1.8	.9
Plant Planning and Construction	7.5	2.2	.7	2.4	2.2
Total	88.3	32.4	8.0	18.4	29.5

TABLE V
ALLOCATION OF SUPERINTENDENTS' TIME AMONG VARIOUS CLASSES OF RECIPIENTS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF 5,001 TO 10,000 ENROLLMENT

	Total Percentage	At Desk	With Teachers	With Specialists	With Others
Building Unit Management	1.7	.1	—	.7	.9
General Policy Development	21.7	7.3	2.6	6.3	5.5
Staff Personnel Administration	16.1	4.6	3.6	4.9	3.0
School-Community Relations	14.2	2.5	1.1	2.9	7.7
Budgeting and Financial Planning	11.9	4.4	.4	4.4	2.7
Management of Funds	6.0	2.6	—	1.8	1.6
Procurement of Materials	2.7	.7	—	1.1	.9
Transportation	1.1	.1	—	.7	.3
Physical Plant Management	3.1	.7	.1	1.6	.7
Plant Planning and Construction	8.8	2.4	.6	3.5	2.3
Total	87.3	25.4	8.4	27.9	25.6

TABLE VI
ALLOCATION OF SUPERINTENDENTS' TIME AMONG VARIOUS CLASSES OF RECIPIENTS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF OVER 10,000 ENROLLMENT

	Total Percentage	At Desk	With Teachers	With Specialists	With Others
Building Unit Management	—	—	—	—	—
General Policy Development	26.4	9.7	2.2	7.7	6.8
Staff Personnel Administration	10.6	2.6	2.6	3.1	2.3
School-Community Relations	16.8	3.5	.8	8.4	4.1
Budgeting and Financial Planning	11.7	5.1	.4	4.1	2.1
Management of Funds	3.9	2.2	.2	1.3	.2
Procurement of Materials	2.7	1.2	.1	1.3	.1
Transportation	2.2	.6	—	1.5	.1
Physical Plant Management	3.9	1.4	.1	2.0	.4
Plant Planning and Construction	10.8	4.4	.4	4.2	1.8
Total	89.0	30.7	6.8	33.6	17.9

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The Functional Allocation of the Superintendent's Time

Albert C. Christensen • Robert L. Filbin • Brian Simpson

What percentage of time does the superintendent of schools spend in the various functions of his job? In attemping to answer this and other related questions the writers of this article used data collected by Robert Utter and Gordon Anderson in seventy-six school districts in the Metropolitan School Study Council and the Associated Public School Systems during 1964-65. Included in this study were superintendents of school systems ranging in size from 975 to 91,219 pupils enrolled who responded to a questionnaire on functions performed and recipients of services.

In order to indicate the influence of school district size on the allocation of superintendents' time, the districts in the sample were divided on the basis of enrollment into four groups: 1) under 2,000, 2) 2,000 to 5,000, 3) 5,001 to 10,000 and 4) over 10,000.

Relation of School District Size to Superintendents' Time on Various Functions

Table I illustrates the percentages of time superintendents spend on ten selected functions accounting for 88.7 per cent of the average superintendent's available time and the way these percentages vary according to district size.

In reviewing the information in Table I it can be seen that as a school district increases in size the average superintendent spends more time in general policy development and school-community relations, and less time in staff-personnel administration and procurement of material and equipment. This implies that larger districts are more likely to have specialists handling such assignments as personnel administration, business management and procurement of materials. The superintendent, then, is free to deal with matters of policy and to concern himself with the community.

Recipients of Functions

A superintendent may spend his time in a number of different ways: at his desk, with teachers, with nonclassroom specialists such as administrators and with others in the community. The average breakdown is shown in Table II. These functions consume a total of 88.7 per cent of his time. The average superintendent spends the rest of his time in miscellaneous functions including guidance, curriculum coordination and instructional material services. This information, given by school district size, is shown in Tables III, IV, V and VI.

The tables show superintendents, in general, spend-

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TABLE I
ALLOCATION OF SUPERINTENDENTS' TIME ON TEN FUNCTIONS BY SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE

	Under 2,000	2,000 to 5,000	5,000 to 10,000	Over 10,000	Mean Percentage of All Districts
Building Unit Management	.0	1.9	1.7	.0	1.3
General Policy Development	12.5	16.3	21.7	26.4	20.3
Staff Personnel Administration	22.0	18.4	16.1	10.6	15.9
School-Community Relations	12.0	15.4	14.2	16.8	15.1
Budgeting and Financial Planning	12.0	14.0	11.9	11.7	12.6
Management of Funds	11.0	4.7	6.0	3.9	5.4
Procurement of Materials	5.4	4.9	2.7	2.7	3.3
Transportation	2.2	1.9	1.1	2.2	1.7
Physical Plant Management	4.1	4.2	3.1	3.9	3.8
Plant Planning and Construction	15.0	7.5	8.8	10.8	9.3
Total	96.2	89.2	87.3	89.0	88.7

TABLE II
ALLOCATION OF SUPERINTENDENTS' TIME AMONG VARIOUS CLASSES OF RECIPIENTS

	Total Percentage	At Desk	With Teachers	With Specialists	With Others
Building Unit Management	1.3	30	—	30	40
General Policy Development	20.3	33	11	28	28
Staff Personnel Administration	15.9	29	20	27	24
School-Community Relations	15.1	25	7	16	52
Budgeting and Financial Planning	12.6	47	5	27	21
Management of Funds	5.4	48	2	26	24
Procurement of Materials	3.3	36	6	33	25
Transportation	1.7	24	—	52	24
Physical Plant Management	3.8	29	3	47	21
Plant Planning and Construction	9.3	31	6	39	24
Total	88.7	33*	9*	28*	29*

* Averages

ing a third of their time at the desk, almost that much with administrative specialists and with others in the community, and less than a tenth with the teaching staff. These allocations vary somewhat with size, particularly time spent with teachers (where the proportion of time decreases as size increases), and with specialists (where the small district head's lack of these forces him to assume these functions himself). Surprisingly, in the largest districts, superintendents spend less time with others (in the school-community relations function), even though the total time spent in this function is greater than the total in smaller districts.

The superintendent spends more time on general policy development (20.3 per cent) than on any other function. He spends nearly three quarters of his time in general policy development, staff-personnel administration, school-community relations, budgeting and financial planning and plant planning and construction.

As a result of not having as much assistance as others, the superintendents of small districts spend more time on staff-personnel administration, management of funds and procurement of materials and equipment.

General Conclusions

This picture of the functional allocation of superintendents' time on the basis of size, while not conclusive, does tend to confirm what former US Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel has said about the superintendent: "He has tended to specialize, and in specializing gives his energy to tending the machinery of his own area rather than exerting social or moral leadership."[1] School-community relations ranks third in all size categories except those with enrollments over 10,000, where it ranks second.

With the major problems of integration, increasing school populations, new programs to meet the needs of a changing society and the implicit demands of gaining community understanding, participation and support for these changes and others to come, it will be more necessary than ever for the superintendent of schools to have enough time to fulfill the essential obligations in the area of school-community relations.

It seems appropriate to suggest on the basis of this limited study that the superintendent's perception of his role needs to be re-examined by the superintendent himself in the light of present needs and demands on him as a community leader.

[1] Francis Keppel, *The Necessary Revolution in American Education*. New York: 1966.